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·A·JOVRNAL·OF·

·ANARCHIST·COMMVNISM·

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Our Manifesto.

We come before you as Anarchist-Communists; we do not suppose this statement will predispose you to view either us, or our propaganda, with much favour.

The very name of Anarchist is held as a reproach, while the person professing Anarchism is regarded as a criminal, madman, or fanatic.

"Practical Anarchism," says the Capitalist Press, the mouthpiece of the present system of society, "consists of blowing up innocent people with dynamite."

Having said that, they cry out for our extermination, as a species of noxious vermin.

Anarchism does not necessarily mean violence even in the propaganda, and would necessarily put a stop to violence once and for all when it is successful.

We have a very strong dislike to cant, and this cant of the middle-class about the use of violence by the proletariat in assertion of their right to live, is especially sickening, for is it not by physical force and violence that they have gained their present position, and by the same means they retain it?

It was in the interest of the middle-class that the miners were murdered at Featherstone, and that working men and girls were ridden down and sabred in the streets of Bristol; it was in the interest of this same middle-class that the Red Indians of America, the Aborigines of Australia and New Zealand, and more recently the Matabele and other African tribes, have been mercilessly driven from their lands and homes, and are being gradually exterminated. Every civilized country furnishes similar instances of Commercial middle-class brutality.

However necessary force may be, and we are fully convinced that workers will never better their condition without the use of it, or without showing that they are in a position to use it, we believe that bombastic talk and glorifying the deeds of men driven to desperation by circumstances, can only serve to retard the progress of Anarchist ideas by alienating the sympathies of the mass of the people.

Do you ask then, what is Anarchist-Communism if it is not merely violence and outrage?

"Anarchist Communism," says Kropotkine, "is the union of the two fundamental tendencies of our society, a tendency towards economic equality and a tendency towards political liberty."

To attain this end we advocate the destruction of monopoly and the abolition of government.

Monopoly, by its control of the means and instruments of production, transit, and exchange, gives to the class holding this monopoly, almost absolute power over those dependent on them for their livelihood; thus while this lasts economic equality is impossible.

Class Government, by its domination of man by man in the interest of privilege, renders true political liberty impossible. It stands in the way of all progress, it stifles free speech, if your speech be obnoxious to it, it keeps the people ignorant by giving the children insufficient education, teaching them only what is necessary to make better wage slaves of them, and not that which will make them thinking men and women. It proffesses to manage the affairs of the country in the interests of all, yet the mass of the workers producing everything get poorer and poorer; while the idle profit mongering Capitalist Class get every year richer and richer.

With people starving for want of bread, it keeps them from the land, which could be made fruitful by their labours, unless they pay the tax which those who own the land demand. It protects with all its power the rich robber of the poor, and punishes the starving man for stealing that which will enable him to live. While never granting any new liberty but what it is absolutely forced to, it is ever ready to encroach on those the people already possess.

Only through the abolition of Monoply and Government, can the people realise true Liberty.

The destruction of monoply and government would also mean the destruction of classes, and make way for equality of condition for all. To day the workers are beginning to vaguely realise this, but there is a great danger of all their efforts being wasted, for they are being led, by people whom they trust, into politics, which has swallowed up, and rendered abortive so many other movements for the betterment of the peoples' condition.

When the people of this country abandoned their revolutionary propaganda to demand their Charter, and took to political methods to obtain it, they were speedily tricked, and the whole agitation might never have been.

So long as the people of Ireland in their struggle for independence carried on their "No Rent Campaign" and similar propaganda, their was hope for their cause, but, having put their trust in politicians, they have now perforce to be content with what they can get.

So here and now in this labour movement, if the workers trust to politicians, their cause is lost. For the peoples' misery and evil condition is as the breath of the politicians' life. Without this to talk about, and invent quack schemes to remedy it, his occupation would be gone; the people all prosperous and happy, the politician would be out of work, with the whole army of officials, who live and grow fat out of the workers' sufferings.

The economic position has to be captured; and the capitalist and landlord monopolists expropriated: till this is done the worker cannot be politically free.

Do you ask what means we advocate?

They are any means which seem best. In our opinion the best, and only sure method, seems the propagation of Anarchist ideas, the education of the workers to a sense of their power, and what they could accomplish by laying down their tools, and refusing any longer to produce the wealth by which their masters live. Let but the workers say to their masters, By your might you have kept us slaving for you, producing that which has brought you every luxury, you have led indolent luxurious lives for long enough at our expense; while you have lived thus, we have suffered misery, starvation, and degradation. We have been blind, but now we see our interests, and realise our might to gain them.

We will now work for ourselves, producing that which we need to satisfy our necessities; on these conditions will we labour again, and on no others.

Then you could organise yourselves into groups for the purpose of production and distribution. Enjoy the full results of your labour, *Live, and not exist, as at present.*

Therefore, we take as our cry: Away with government and oppression, make way for the people, and Liberty.

In this number we commence a Humorous, Satirical, and philosophical Novel, by Claude Tillier, translated from the French by Benj. R. Tucker. Here it may be as well to let the translator speak for himself:—

"I resurrect a buried treasure; a novel unlike any other, by an author unlike any other; a novel, as Chas. Monselet says, that 'has no equivalent in the literature of this century'; a novel which, despite the pessimism with which it opens and the pathos with which it closes, —yes, even in these,—must take rank among the wittiest and most humorous ever written; a novel of philosophy, of progress, of reality, of humanity; a novel of the heart and of the head; a novel that is less a work of art than a work of genius,—the work of an obscure genius, a child of the French Revolution who lived and died early in the nineteenth century and will be famous, early in the twentieth."

MY UNCLE BENJAMIN.

By CLAUDE TILLIER.

CHAPTER I.

WHO MY UNCLE WAS.

I REALLY do not know why man so clings to life. What does he find that is so agreeable in this insipid succession of nights and days, of winter and summer? Always the same sky, the same sun; always the same green pastures and the same yellow fields; always the same speeches of the crown, the same knaves and the same dupes. If this is the best that God could do, he is a sorry workman, and the scene-shifter at the Grand Opera is cleverer than he.

More personalities, you say; there you are now, indulging in personalities against God. What do you expect? To be sure, God is a functionary and a high functionary too, although his functions are not a sinecure. But I am not afraid that he will sue me in the courts for damages, wherewith to build a church, as a compensation for the injury that I may have done to his honor.

I know very well that the court officials are more sensitive in regard to his reputation than he is himself; but it is precisely that of which I complain. By virtue of what title do these men in black arrogate to themselves the right to avenge injuries which are wholly personal to him? Have they a power of attorney signed by Jehovah that authorizes them?

Do you believe that he is highly pleased when the police magistrates take in hand his thunderbolts and launch them brutally upon the unfortunate for an offence of a few syllables? Besides, what proof have these gentlemen that God has been offended? He is there in the court-room, fastened to his cross, while they sit in there arme-hairs: let them question him; if he answers them in the affirmative, I will admit my error. Do you know why he tumbled from the throne the Capet dynasty, that old and august salad of kings so saturated with holy oil? I know, and I am going to tell you. It is because it enacted the law against sacrilege.

But this is not the point.

What is it to live? To rise, to go to bed to breakfast, to dine, and begin again to-morrow. When one has performed this task for forty years, it finally becomes very insipid.

Men resemble the spectators, some sitting on velvet others on bare boards, but the greater number standing, who witness the same drama every evening, and yawn every one of them till they nearly split their jaws. All agree that it is mortally tiresome, that they would be much better off in their beds, and yet no one is willing to give up his place.

To live, is that worth the trouble of opening one's eyes? All our enterprises have but a beginning; the house that we build is for our heirs; the morning wrapper that we wad with love to envelop our old age, will be made into swaddling-clothes for our grandchildren. We say to ourselves: "There, the day is ended!" We light our lamp, we stir our fire; we get ready to pass a quiet and peaceful evening at the corner of our hearth; tic, tac, some one knocks at the door. Who is there? It is death; we must start. When we have all the appetites of youth, when our blood is full of iron and alcohol, we are without a cent; when our teeth and stomach are gone, we are millionaires. We have scarcely time to say to a woman: "I love you!" at our second kiss, she is old and decrepit. Empires are no sooner consolidated than they begin to crumble; they resemble those ant hills which the poor insects build with such great efforts; when it needs but a grain to finish them, [illegible] lies them under his broad foot, or a cart under its wheel. What you call the vegetable stratum of this globe consists of thousands and thousands of shrouds laid one upon the other by successive generations. The great names that resound upon the lips of men, names of capitals, monarchs, generals, are the clattering *debris* of old empires. You do not take a step that you do not raise about you the dust of a thousand things destroyed before they were finished.

I am forty years old; I have already passed through four professions: I have been a monitor, a soldier, a school-teacher, and now I am a journalist. I have been on land and on sea, under tents and at the corner of the fireside, behind prison bars and in the midst of the broad expanses of the world; I have obeyed and I have commanded; I have had moments of wealth and years of poverty. I have been loved and I have been hated; I have been applauded and I have been ridiculed. I have been a son and a father, a lover and a husband; I have passed through the season of flowers and through the season of fruits, as the poets say; and under none of these circumstances have I found any reasons to congratulate myself on being confined in the skin of a man rather than in that of a wolf or a fox, rather than in the shell of an oyster, in the bark of a tree, or in the jacket of a potato. Perhaps if I were a man of property, a man with an income of fifty thousand francs, I should think differently.

In the meantime, my opinion is that man is a machine made expressly for sorrow; he has only five senses with which to receive pleasure, and suffering comes to him through the whole surface of his body: in whatever spot he is pricked, he bleeds; in whatever spot he is burned, he blisters. The lungs, the liver, the bowels can give him no enjoyment: nevertheless the lungs inflame and make him cough; the liver becomes obstructed and throws him into a fever; the bowels gripe and give him the colic. You have not a nerve, a muscle, a sinew under your skin that cannot make you howl with pain.

Your organization unjoints at every moment, like a bad pendulum. You raise your eyes to heaven to invoke it, and a swallew's dung falls into them and dries them up; if you go to a ball you sprain your ankle and have to be carried home on a mattress; to day you are a great writer, a great philosopher, a great poet: a fibre of your brain breaks, and in vain will they bleed you or put ice on your head, to-morrow you will only be a poor madman.

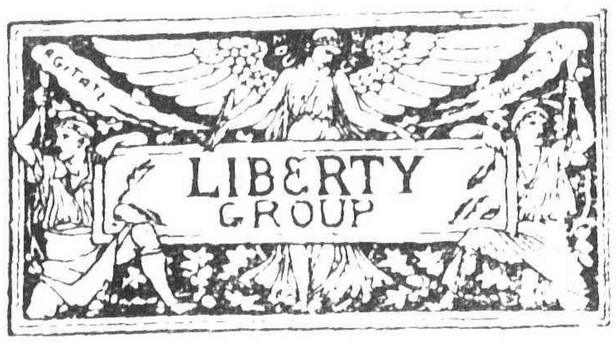
Sorrow hides behind all your pleasures; you are gluttonous rats which it attracts with a bit of savory bacon.

You are in the shadow of your garden, and you shout: "Oh! what a beautiful rose!" and the rose pricks you: "Oh! what a beautiful fruit!" there is a wasp on it, and the fruit bites you.

You say: God has made us to serve him and to love him. It is not true. He has made you to suffer. The man who does not suffer is an ill made machine, an imperfect creature, a moral cripple, one of nature's abortions. Death is not only the end of life, it is its remedy. One is nowhere so well off as in the grave. If you believe me, you will order, instead of a new overcoat, a coffin. It is the only garment that does not pinch.

What I have just said to you you may take for a philosophical idea or for a paradox, it certainly is all one to me. But I pray you at least to accept it as a preface, for I cannot make you a better one, or one more suitable to the sad and lamentable story which I am going to have the honor of relating to you.

You will permit me to trace my story back to the second generation, like that of a prince, or of a hero, when his funeral oration is delivered. Perhaps you will not lose thereby. The customs of that time were well worth those of ours: the people carried swords, but they danced with them, and made them rattle like castanets.



HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT. NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT. LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT AND THE CAUSE IS WON!

"LIBERTY" is a journal of Anarchist-Communism, but articles on all phases of the Revolutionary movement will be freely admitted, provided they are worded in suitable language. No contributions should exceed one column in length. The writer over whose signature the article appears is alone responsible for the opinions expressed, and the Editor in all matters reserves to himself the fullest right to reject any article.

We would ask our contributors, to write plainly and on one side of the paper only.

All Communications should be addressed,—The Editor, Liberty 7 Beadon Road, Hammersmith W.

The trade supplied by W. Reeves, 185 Fleet Street, E. C.

To Correspondents.

G. LAWRANCE.—Your article will appear in the "Why I Am's."

TOUZEAU PARRIS.—Thanks for "Socialism and Individual Liberty" which will shortly appear.

H. D. MOORE, Norwich.—We are indeed glad in having your good wishes, accept our greeting. Let us know how you like "LIBERTY"

E. SHEPHERD, Aberdeen.—"LIBERTY" will be monthly at present, we send to you and comrades Fraternal Greeting.

J. BLAIR SMITH.—Thanks, for suggestion which we shall act on, we are also pleased that you intend pushing the sale. we are anxious to to again hear from you.

M. GROVES.—We send you Hearty Greeting in return for your good wishes and approval of "LIBERTY."

LIBERTY.

LONDON, JANUARY, 1894.

Between Ourselves.

COMRADES, THE WORLD OVER, GREETING.

We offer no apology to the public for our appearance; but comrades,and others, must excuse the roughness of our attire, and the slips in the printing.

There are many reasons why "Liberty" should be alive. Many, one time anti-parliamentarian, and revolutionary socialists, have been drawn into politics. But on the other hand there are indications of many earnest Social-Democrats becoming disgusted with the reactionary tactics of many of the most recently elected, Socialist (*sic.*) labour members.

We must endeavour to point them to a new field of action. By the organised workers must the revolution be accomplished. They supply the basis (at present insufficiently developed) for the reorganisation of society.

Anyone who has had the bringing out of a paper, without professional assistance, can understand how we set our teeth as each trouble turned up. We are not capitalists. Having raked up enough money to buy a little type, and a press, we comrades set to work to learn printing.

We thank all our comrades who have helped us with their advice and assistance; and we hope that those who spent Christmas '93 in an extemporised printing den, will long work as cheerfully, and hopefully for the cause, as they have to produce No. 1 of "Liberty."

THE FRONTISPIECE, is by W. M. Rowe, and we wish to assure him of our thorough appreciation of his work; our thanks are also due to G. F. Watts R.A., for permission to reproduce his celebrated picture "MAMMON" for "Social Contrasts"

Walter Crane, ever ready to help on the cause, has done good work in keeping alive the memory of "The Chicago Martyrs" by his latest design "The Chicago Anarchists". Our old Comrade T. Bolas has also given valuable assistance in many ways.

We offer our provincial friends, if they will guarrantee 100 or more copies a half-column for notices of meetings and reports of their propaganda this we think would be of great service from many points of view. Friends in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Manchester, Norwich, etc., will please let us know what they think of the offer.

The miners arrested during the late coal lock out, have been sentenced by the impartial (?) tribunals of this country, in the usual brutal manner, characteristic of judges when dealing with workmen arrested during a strike. Force men into revolt, then punish them for so doing.

Where are the miners, and labour representatives, that they have not raised their voices in parliament about this cruel injustice? They know perfectly well that the threatening attitude assumed by these men did more to win victory for the miners, than anything else; showing as it did that it would not be safe to trifle with them, to too, great an extent.

But, we suppose it is not their game, to stand the risk of being regarded as the apologists of disorder. So they leave the miners to their fate. The men sentenced are not criminals, but prisoners of war. Being the victims of an admitted conspiracy among the coalowners to force down wages, and force up prices.

We can fully understand the silence of the capitalist press, that voiced from interested motives the miners cause; also that of the workers so-called representatives The silence however, of the workers themselves, is altogether beyond comprehension. Why do they not demand the immediate release of these men?

Whatever opinion one may hold about the recent explosions which have occurred in our peaceful law and order blessed society, on the continent they certainly have drawn attention to Anarchism, and its methods, in this country. The press has suddenly shown an overwhelming desire to know what we are going to do.

To obtain this information Louise Michel, Malatesta, and others have been interviewed. Though mutilated, the interviews give to many who we cannot reach with our ordinary propaganda, an idea as to who and what Anarchists are, and may do something towards spreading the light.

The Legislator Defined.

Legislators are men who make rules for others and exceptions for themselves. GUYARD.

Blind Content.

A mind satisfied with the present will be careful not to trouble itself about the future.—HORACE.

WHY I AM A SOCIAL-DEMOCRAT.

By G. BERNARD SHAW.

The question you have put to me as above is one that I should like to get out of answering, because the longer I live the greater becomes my dislike to labelling myself as a Social-Democrat or anything else. I am not a man with a theory, binding myself to all the logical conclusions of that theory; and you will find, if you study my polemics against Anarchism, that I deal, not with the theories of the Anarchists or the logical conclusions of those theories, but solely with the actual measures they advocate and the concrete results of those measures. The world was not made to fit anybody's theory, nor can our misfits be remedied by any mortal power, not even the Procrustean forces of the Inquisition or the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834.

I prefer a municipal gas supply to a private enterprise gas supply, not on principle, but because it means two and threepence per thousand feet to the consumer instead of three and a penny, and to the worker twenty-four shillings a week for an eight hours day instead of eighteen shillings for a ten or twelve hour day.

I prefer Socialism to Manchesterism because it will add the rent of land and of capital to the reward of labor and thereby eliminate the idler, with obvious advantages to the country in which I have to live.

I prefer Democracy to Autocracy, again not on principle, but because on looking about me I find that it is a good deal better to be a Swiss than a Russian, and I attribute the superiority of life in Switzerland to her democratic institutions.

At the same time I am just as hostile to the supremacy of the community in questions of Freethought and Free Speech as I am to the supremacy of the individual over land and capital; and my democracy does not in the least prevent me from believing that the country will come more and more to be governed by State departments of highly paid and skilled permanent officials who will often be of one opinion when both the democratic parliament and the people behind it are of another. On such occasions the officials will often be able to override both parliament and people.

Some of your subscribers will say here that I am presenting the social problem as if there were no alternative between democracy and autocracy, or between Social-Democracy and Manchesterism. They will say that I am ignoring the alternative of Anarchism, Individualist or Communist. But I have stated very fully in my "Impossibilities of Anarchism" my reasons for thinking that there is no escape on either of these lines from the economic and political difficulties with which we are struggling. I am convinced that the democratic movement has now gained sufficient power to complete itself, and that the same forces which turned feudalism into Manchesterism will turn Manchesterism into Social-Democracy. I may be wrong, just as the Anarchists may be wrong; but at any rate I have rendered my reasons for regarding Socialism and Democracy, or rather the combination of both known as Social-Democracy, as not only inevitable, but highly desirable.

By highly desirable, however, I do not mean that the advent of Social Democracy will be the advent of the millennium. And here comes in a difference between myself and many other Social-Democrats who would deny to me and all Fabians the right to call ourselves Social-Democrats. They feel somehow that although we lay down the law in the orthodox socialist fashion to our audiences in lectures, and handle our opponents in pamphlets very roughly indeed, rather to shock some of them thus, yet Social-Democracy is not to us the religion that it is to them. They are quite right in this. The anti-Fabian Social Democrat, with his red tie and his copy of Justice, believes that Social-Democracy will establish an earthly paradise, in which all evil ambitions and corrupt motives and class distinctions can have no existence, in which there shall be no supply and demand, no money, no banks, no wages, no employers, no Maxim guns, no Trade Unions, no patents or monopolies, no criminal code, nothing of all those things that "the present system" has made hateful to us. Like Gonzalo in *The Tempest*, he would say, if he expressed what is always at the back of his mind:

> No kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
> And use of service, none; contract, succession,
> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
> Would I not have; but nature should bring forth
> Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
> To feed my innocent people.
> I would with such perfection govern, sir,
> To excel the golden age.

I have purposely left out such lines as "No occupation; all men idle, all; and women too"; for, to do the human race justice, its Utopists no longer put idleness in their programs; but in other respects the old Utopia is still inspiring us.

Now I — and in this respect I am a typical Fabian — do not believe in the millennium. Social-Democracy will have for many a long day its prisons, its armies, its gallows, its humbugs, its intriguers, its selfishness and sloth in things real and its big talk and enthusiasm in things ideal, its helpless dependence on a minority of able men, and its mass of people, capable of nothing beyond their own immediate concerns, taking advantage of the higher wages, shorter hours and better education obtainable under Social-Democracy without in the least understanding it. The man with the red flag turns sick at the picture, and asks indignantly whether a state of things so like our own is worth any man's labour and sacrifice. The Fabian, being mostly a middle class man with a hereditary aptitude for business, replies that a thousand pounds is better than a penny, but that a penny is always worth trying for when you cannot get twopence.

I dare say the Fabians plodding after their pennyworths of Socialism cut a poor figure in the imagination of our enthusiasts beside the men who will accept nothing short of than the whole "means of Production, Distribution and Exchange"; but after all, the penny is real, as the Blackwall Tunnel men found when their wages were raised by "mere Progressivism" from fivepence to sixpence an hour.

I do not know whether you are any wiser now as to why I am a Social Democrat; but the rest of my reasons would overcrowd your space.

Rich and Poor.

"Care for us! True indeed they ne'er cared for us. Suffer us to famish and their store-houses cramm'd with grain! make edicts for usury to support usurers; repeal daily any act whatsoever established against the rich and provide more piercing statutes daily to chain up and restricts the poor — *if the wars do not eat us up, they will!*". COLIOLANUS, Act i., sc. 1.

Poverty and Suicide.

It is the last straw which breaks the camel's back and undoubtedly it is this last straw—the inability to satisfy the cravings of the physical man—which drives a considerable number of our wretched to self-destruction.—"Suicide and Insanity," by S. A. K. Strahan.

INTERNATIONAL SONG.

Translated from the French by L. S. Bevington.

Arise, ye outcasts of the earth,
The despots see affrighted ;
They feel a crater 'neath their feet,
And all their prospects blighted.
In foolish league and murderous,
They seek to hide the rosy dawn,
And blot from heaven the ardent light
Of Freedom's new and glorious morn.

Arise! arise! down-trodden of the earth,
Crushed in the charnel house of man by men,
Arise! arise! ye thralls of poverty,
United all men, Latin, Sclav, and Teuton.

Behold the Third Republic now
Turn prostituted traitor,
The Czar's French crowd of lunatics
Adore the Exterminator.
Oh! since the whole must disappear,
What matters it. The folly ends;
The peoples all, afar and near,
Awake, and join their hands: as friends.

Sleek bourgeois, Cæsar guard you now,
Strong armed or weak, protect you well;
Bastard Republic, cunning Pope,
The tocsin sounds your knell.
Those who are forced apart to-day
By the ferocious Mammon Kings
To-morrow shall be joined by blood,
Hear the tocsin, rings and rings.

The potentates would wage a war,
To slaughter troops of soldiers,
To make their frontiers fixed and firm,
As consecrated sepulchres.
There comes the day of Anarchy,
When in the immense relief at last
The human wolves of Russia, France,
From human blood shall fast.

LOUISE MICHEL.

AN ANARCHIST ON ANARCHY.

By ELISÉE RECLUS.

[Reprinted by permission from the Contemporary Review.]

To most Englishmen the word Anarchy is so evil-sounding that ordinary readers of the "Contemporary Review" will probably turn from these pages with aversion, wondering how anybody could have the audacity to write them. With the crowd of commonplace chatterers we are already past praying for; no reproach is too bitter for us, no epithet too insulting. Public speakers on social and political subjects find that abuse of Anarchists is an unfailing passport to popular favour. Every conceivable crime is laid to our charge, and opinion, too indolent to learn the truth, is easily persuaded that Anarchy is but another name for wickedness and chaos. Overwhelmed with opprobrium and held up to hatred, we are treated on the principle that the surest way of hanging a dog is to give it a bad name.

There is nothing surprising in all this. The chorus of imprecations with which we are assailed is quite in the nature of things, for we speak in a tongue unhallowed by usage, and belong to none of the parties that dispute the possession of power. Like all innovators, whether they be violent or pacific, we bring not peace but a sword, and are in nowise astonished to be received as enemies.

Yet it is not with light hearts that we incur so much ill will, nor are we satisfied with merely knowing that it is undeserved. To risk the loss of so precious an advantage as popular sympathy without first patiently seeking out the truth and carefully considering our duty were an act of reckless folly. To a degree never dreamt of by men who are borne unresistingly on the great current of public opinion, are we bound to render to our conscience a reason for the faith that is in us, to strengthen our convictions by study of nature and mankind, and above all, to compare them with that ideal justice which has been slowly elaborated by the untold generations of our race. This ideal is known to all, and is almost too trite to need recapitulation. It exists in the moral teaching of every people, civilized or savage, every religion has tried to adapt it to its dogmas and precepts, for it is the ideal of equality of rights and reciprocity of services. "We are all brethren," is a saying repeated from one end of the world to the other, and the principle of universal brotherhood expressed in this saying implies a complete solidarity of interests and efforts.

Accepted in its integrity by simple souls, does not this principle seem to imply as a necessary consequence the social state formulated by modern socialists: "To each according to his needs, from each according to his powers?" Well, we are simple souls, and we hold firmly to this ideal of human morality. Of a surety there is much dross mixed with the pure metal, and the personal and collective egoisms of families, cities, castes, peoples, and parties have wrought on this groundwork some startling variations. But we have not to do here with the ethics of selfish interests, it is enough to identify the central points of convergence towards which all partial ideas more or less tend. This focus of gravitation is justice. If humanity be not a vain dream, if all our impressions, all our thoughts, are not pure hallucinations, one capital fact dominates the history of man — that every kindred and people yearns after justice. The very life of humanity is but one long cry for that fraternal equity which still remains unattained. Listen to the words, uttered nearly three thousand years ago, of old Hesiod, answering beforehand all those who contend that the struggle for existence dooms us to eternal strife. "Let fishes, the wild beasts and birds, devour one another — but our law is justice."

Yet how vast is the distance that separates us from the justice invoked by the poet in the very dawn of history! How great is the progress we have still to make before we may rightfully cease comparing ourselves with wild creatures fighting for a morsel of carrion! It is in vain that we pretend to be civilized, if civilization be that which Mr. Alfred R. Wallace has described as "the harmony of individual liberty with the collective will." It is really too easy to criticise contemporary society, its morals its conventions, and its laws, and to show how much its practices fall short of the ideal justice formulated by thinkers and desired by peoples. To repeat stale censures is to risk being called mere disclaimers, scatterers of voices in the market-place. And yet so long as the truth is not heard, is it not our duty to go on speaking it in season and out of season? A sincere man owes it to himself to expose the frightful barbarity which prevails in the hidden depths of a society so outwardly well ordered. Take for instance, our great cities, the leaders of civilization, especially the most populous, and, in many respects, the first of all — that immense London, which gathers to herself the riches of the world, whose every warehouse is worth a king's ransom; where are to be found enough, and more than enough, of food and clothing for the needs of the teeming millions that throng her streets in greater numbers than the ants which swarm in the never ending labyrinth of their subterranean galleries. And yet the wretched who cast longing and hungry eyes on those hoards of wealth may be counted by the hundred thousand; by the side of untold splendors, what is consuming the vitals of entire populations, and it is only at times that the fortunate for whom these treasures are amassed hear, as a muffled wailing, the bitter cry which rises eternally from those unseen depths. Below the London of fashion is a London accursed, a London whose only food are dirt stained fragments, whose only garments are filthy rags and whose only dwellings are fetid dens. Have the disinherited the consolation of hope? No: they are deprived of all. There are some among them who live and die in dampness and gloom without once raising their eyes to the sun.

What boots it to the wretched outcast, burning with fever or craving for bread, that the Book of the Christians opens the doors of heaven more widely to him than to the rich? Besides his present misery all these promises of happiness, even if he heard them, would seem the bitterest irony. Does it not appear, moreover, — judging by the society in which the majority of preachers of the Gospel most delight, — that the words of Jesus are reversed, that the "Kingdom of God" is the guerdon of the fortunate of this world, — a world where spiritual and temporal government are on the best of terms, and religion leads as surely to earthly power as to heavenly bliss? "Religion is a cause for preferment, irreligion a bar to it," as a famous commentator of the Bible, speaking to his sovereign, said it ought to be.*

When ambition thus finds its account in piety, and hypocrites practise religion in order to give what they are pleased to call their conscience a higher mercantile value, is it surprising that the great army of the hopeless should forget the way to church? Do they deceive themselves in thinking that, despite official invitation, they would not always be well received in the "house of God?" Without speaking here of churches whose sittings are sold at a price, where you may enter only purse in hand, is it nothing to the poor to feel themselves arrested on the threshold by the cold looks of well-clad men and the tightened lips of elegant women? True, no wall bars the passage, but an obstacle still more formidable stops the way, — the dark atmosphere of hatred and disgust which rises between the disinherited and the world's elect.

Yet the first word uttered by the minister when he stands up in the pulpit is "Brethren," a word which, by a characteristic differentiation, has come to mean no more than a potential and theoretic fraternity without practical reality. Nevertheless, its primitive sense has not altogether perished, and if the outcast that hears it be not stupefied by hunger or be he not one of those boneless beings who repeat idiotically all they hear, what bitter thoughts will be suggested by this word "Brethren," coming from the lips of men who feel so little its force! The impressions of my childhood surge back into my mind. When I heard for the first time an earnest and eager voice beseech the "Father which art in heaven" to give us "our daily bread," it seemed to me that by a mysterious act a meal would descend from on high on all the tables of the world. I imagined that these words, repeated millions and millions of times, were a cry of human brotherhood, and that each, in uttering them, thought of all. I deceived myself. With some the prayer is sincere; with the greater part it is but an empty sound, a gust of wind like that which passes through the weeds.

To be continued.

* [illegible]

GOVERNMENT SWEATING.

In this last decade of the nineteenth century when so much is being said and written about the advantages to be gained by the State taking under its control, the mines, railways, etc., a few words about the management of one of our greatest national workshops, the Post Office, may not be out of place.

In spite of all that is said in its favour, it is questionable whether the community derives much benefit from this State monopoly, competition being forbidden by Act of Parliament, and whether the business of the Post Office could not be quite as well carried on by private companies. Certainly, the following facts show that the employees could be treated no worse. We do not wish to convey the idea, that the capitalist system is in any way superior to the State Socialist, they are equally bad, both having the same inherent evil, the exploitation of the labourer. To whom it matters nothing, whether he is being exploited in the interest of the State, or of private capitalists. Only this, the State forbids him to take any action, even political, for a betterment of his position.

The greatest difficulty is to make people understand that there are other workers in this state hive besides postmen. If you speak of tyranny, and the grievances under which the men labour, you will generally receive a mild expression of sympathy for the poor postman.

Now I do not want it to be assumed by this that the position of these men is all that it should be, quite the contrary, in fact, but I do want to emphasise that there are others, who for the reason that they do not come into direct contact with the public, are treated infinitely worse. For an example let us take the G. P. O., East Building. Here we find twenty men sweated because of the smallness of their number to such an extent that, if it were done by a private firm, would call forth a strong outburst of public opinion. Some of these men—they are known as "lift attendants"—have been employed at this work for the last twenty years, and are now receiving nineteen shillings per week! And this for a working day of 8 hours made up in two shifts viz: 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. and back again from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Unlike the postmen they have no uniform, have not the opportunity of setting themselves up with a handsome Christmas-box at the public expense, and have to live, because of excessive rents, some considerable distance from their work, the result of which is that they never get from year end to year end more than four hours successive sleep; and all this for nineteen shillings per week. This is State employment.

Then we take the case of the Mail Cart drivers working, as has been proved, in some cases as many as a hundred hours a week for the miserable pittance of eighteen shillings. And then your Liberal Postmaster General endeavours to shirk his responsibility by stating in the House of Commons that they are employed by a contractor. Does he not engage the contractor? And in engaging him is he not morally bound to see that the man he engages is if not a generous man, at least a humane one.

And what can be said of treatment of men engaged in the sorting offices, and the cruel system of espoinage carried on there, where, can it be believed, men are reported by spies, and never permited to know their accusers. All manner of charges are laid against the men in this way, and on the strength of such reports the poor culprit is brought on duty to work two and sometimes four hours extra without pay. The accuser may be the man's greatest enemy and may not have the slightest foundation for the charge; if once he reports you, farewell to all redress. Should the matter be brought forward in the House of Commons, it calls forth a reply that what is done is done in the interest of discipline and for the good of the public service.

Then, in conclusion, we take the case of City Telegraph messengers who one morning a week are compelled to attend for two hours drill with carbines, just as if they were full blown soldiers on pack drill, and for this which the P. M. G. says is done for the benefit of the boys health, the lads receive 2d. per hour and then have to take up their ordinary duties of running about with telegrams for the next 8 hours.

This is by no means all that could be said of the advantages (?) slack employment. Workmen, seeking blindly for some redress of their present state, would do well to consider these few facts before spending their time, wasting their energies, to obtain the State as their employers, in place of their present masters.

Voluntary co-operation, for the purpose of carrying on the postal as well as all other industries, can alone guarrantee to the workers freedom from exploitation.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

ITALY.

Sicily *is* in open rebellion. The people, after having carried on an extensive agrarian strike, are now revolting against local taxes, especially custom duties (*octroi*).

In several places they have burned the *octroi-offices*, together with the town-hall, and the collecting of the taxes has been stopped.

To understand this particular phase of the revolutionary movement in Sicily, is has to be known that in that country municpal *cliques* are composed of local landlords and their servants. They are at the same time both the economic and political power.

As landlords, they rack-rent the poor peasants, force them to pay numberless *redevances* and gratuities to themselves and their armed servants. As the mayors or communal councillors they levy taxes of the most scandalous kind on every fire-place and on all articles of food which the poor peasants consume. Property and Government are here seen to be two aspects of one and the same thing. Now the peasants have revolted, and that system of wholesale robbery is breaking down.

The Goverment is now trying to sooth the exasperation of the people by tardy and insufficient concession, at the same time preparing to prejudice the troops which are now in Sicily who, however are too much in sympithy with the people by bringing fresh troops from the Continent.

The agitation is spreading to Calabria and other parts of the Continent; and it is quite possible that Italy is on the eve of a Social Revolution.

BRUSSELS.

M. Volders, editor of *Le Peuple*, and leader of the Belgium Labour Party, has been committed for trial on the charge of using inflammatory language in an article published by him on the bomb outrage in the French Chamber.

FRANCE.

The French Government is no longer master of itself. It is in a situation of which there is no similar in history; it feels itself powerless against the development of Anarchism in France; it does not know what to do in order to allay the feeling of disgust in the mind of the people caused by the Panama disclosures and the economic crisis. The people openly applaud the explosions and all the acts of rebellion against bourgeios society. The repressive laws passed in a panic will only serve to more strongly convince those who believe in carrying on a violent struggle against the oppressors of humanity.

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